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SUBJECT: CHINA'S AMBASSADOR CALLS FOR INTERNATIONAL
COOPERATION TO HELP NEPAL FIGHT MAOISTS

Classified By: Ambassador Michael E. Malinowski, Reasons 1.5(b),(d).

1. (C) Summary. "International cooperation" was needed to deal with Nepal's Maoist insurgency, China's Ambassador to Nepal told Ambassador at a May 8 dinner. China would provide moral support and assistance in this effort, Ambassador Wu Congyong said, but consistent with its policy of non-interference in other countries' internal affairs, China was confident that Nepal could solve its own problems. Wu expressed concern about the spread of Maoist violence throughout Nepal, saw little hope for a negotiated settlement, and predicted a prolonged conflict. New Delhi should prevent the Maoists from using Indian territory. Wu explained China's official term for the insurgents: "anti-government forces." On May 10 Wu spoke out publicly against the Maoists for the first time, repeating to the press the points he made to Ambassador May 8. The Chinese seem shocked by the worsening crisis and have signaled that they want to be part of the solution to Nepal's problems. End Summary.

China Stresses International Cooperation

2. (C) "International cooperation" was needed to address the problem of the Maoist insurgency in Nepal, Chinese Ambassador to Nepal Wu Congyong has told us. At Wu's invitation, Ambassador and Emboffs dined at the Chinese Embassy May 8. Wu emphasized that China would provide "moral support and assistance within its means" to help the government of Nepal deal with the Maoists, but did not specify what form this aid would take. Social reforms would also be needed to address the root causes of the insurgency, Wu added. China's goal was to ensure Nepal's peace, stability and security. Moreover, Wu continued, China's policy of non-intervention in other countries' internal affairs also applied to Nepal, and China considered that Nepal could solve its own problems. The same evening Ambassador briefed Wu on USG policy towards Nepal, plans to assist the GON, and Prime Minister Deuba's May 7 Oval Office meeting.

Chinese See Worsening Situation, Grim Prospects

3. (C) Wu expressed concern that the security situation in Nepal has worsened and that the violence has spread from remote areas to the Kathmandu Valley. Furthermore, of late Maoist violence has become increasingly intense. When the Ambassador replied that such violence could not be tolerated, Wu agreed. Wu commented that security problems have prevented more Chinese tourists from visiting Nepal. (Note: China and Nepal recently completed a bilateral tourism agreement designating Nepal as an approved destination for Chinese tour groups. Two Chinese construction project workers have been injured as a result of the conflict in Nepal, one in February 2001, and the other in April of this year, both in Sindhupalchowk district north of Kathmandu. Both were employees of the same project. End Note.)

4. (C) Wu judged prospects for a negotiated settlement to be poor. Nepal's government called on the Maoists to lay down their arms, but this is unlikely. At the same time, the Maoists set out three conditions for talks, but these are not acceptable to the GON. The current situation will likely go on for a long time, Wu predicted.

India Needs to Crack Down

5. (C) Discussing New Delhi's role in the conflict, Wu said that it would be good if India could prevent the Maoists from using Indian territory. Wu noted that the open border between Nepal and India made it easy to smuggle arms and logistical supplies as well as to move personnel back and forth.

Will the Real Maoists Please Stand Up

6. (C) Wu explained that as a matter of policy China did not refer to Nepal's insurgents as "Maoists" (Chinese: Maopai), but rather as "anti-government forces" (Ch: fan zhengfu

shili). The insurgents had "usurped" the name of Chinese leader Mao Zedong, Wu insisted. (Note: Although he took pains to explain his government's preference for the latter term, in conversation the Chinese Ambassador - a Japan hand who speaks little English - more often than not referred to the insurgents as "Maopai." End Note.)

Chinese Speak Out Against Maoists

17. (C) Two days after hosting Ambassador and Emboffs, Ambassador Wu for the first time spoke out publicly against the Maoists. Press reports quote him as stating, "we condemn the violence and terrorist acts unleashed by anti-government forces in Nepal." (Note: The Chinese Ambassador was speaking at a May 10 event launching his Embassy's website: www.chinaembassy.org.np. His public comments tracked with those he made at the March 8 dinner. End Note.) In Wu's public statement he also said that "the Chinese government consistently opposes terrorism in any form and upholds international cooperation to combat terrorism," and "the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Nepal should be fully respected and maintained."

Comment

18. (C) The Chinese Ambassador seemed genuinely shocked by the dramatic increase in the level of Maoist violence in recent months. Watching as a friendly and formerly benign neighbor struggles to put down a brutal insurgency is evidently discomfiting, as is the prospect of another hot spot in South Asia and instability on the Tibet border. Cognizant of increased coordination between the U.S., U.K. and other donors on the response to the insurgency, Ambassador Wu invited us over in order to send a clear signal that China wants to be part of the solution to Nepal's worsening crisis. That in recent years contacts between our two embassies have been sparse and intermittent underlines the significance of Wu's overture.

MALINOWSKI